

FWP COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: March 8, 2012

Agenda Item: Peregrine Falcon Take

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Approval of Final Rule

Time Needed for Presentation: 15 minutes

Background

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service delisted peregrine falcons in 1999 and Montana followed in 2005. Monitoring shows continued increases in the number of nesting pairs and production of young, primarily in western Montana. In 2009, the Montana Peregrine Institute reported 84 occupied nests and 176 young fledged from 79 successful nests for a rate of 2.2 juveniles per successful nest. This exceeds the 15-year average in Montana of 1.9 young fledged per successful nest. A full statewide survey was not completed in 2010 nor 2011 and therefore the recommendation for the 2012 take is based on 2009 productivity estimates and the agreed take of no more than 5 percent in FWP's 2007 Final Environmental Assessment. From 2008 through 2011 a total of 42 falconers applied for 18 permits and 5 birds were taken.

Public Involvement Process & Results:

Representatives of the Montana Falconers Association support the rule as proposed. During the 30-day comment period, a total of 126 separate comments were received. The majority (94%) of comments were supportive of the proposed action. Six percent of the comments received were in opposition either to the proposed take or to the sport of falconry in general.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale:

Based on findings in FWP's 2007 Final Environmental Assessment and the history of peregrine take in Montana:

- authorize take of five nestling or fledged peregrines in 2012 and five in 2013 by residents through a quota system.
- the quota for take in 2013 will be reduced accordingly if the quota is exceeded in 2012.
- any over-harvest during the total two-year take period will be considered in the subsequent year's regulations process.
- authorize take of one nestling or fledged peregrine in 2012 or 2013 through a nonresident permit system.
- nonresident take will be regulated through the nonresident falconry ARM rule.
- nonresident take will be regulated through a permit system.
- restrict take to June 1-August 31.
- limit take to one peregrine per year per falconer.
- a successful resident or nonresident falconer who takes a peregrine will be required to wait two years before attempting to take another peregrine.
- general and master falconers only are allowed to take peregrines.
- prohibit take from eastern Montana to encourage expansion of the breeding population,
- prohibit take from certain nests of high value wildlife viewing opportunity and/or part of on-going agency approved research efforts,
- prohibit the sale, barter or exchange of birds from the wild.

Proposed Motion

I move to approve FWP's recommendation to authorize the take of up to 10 peregrine falcons for falconry purposes by residents and one peregrine falcon for falconry purposes by nonresidents during the 2012-2013 take period.